

***-Legislation Directs EPA to Examine Impacts of Climate Change on Water Resources-
-Bill Now Moves to House Floor for Action-***

Washington, D.C.

– The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on May 15th passed U.S. Rep. John Hall's (D-NY19) legislation that will help protect America's water resources. The bill, H.R. 5770, would direct the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Academies of Science (NAS) to study the impact of climate change on America's water resources. The bill now heads to the full House for further consideration.

"America's rivers, streams, lakes, aquifers and other water resources are the lifeblood of our nation,," said Hall. "The status of these waters has direct bearing on public health, agricultural production, and national prosperity. In light of the critical role that water resources play in our daily lives, it is imperative that we take action to understand how they will be affected by the forces of climate change."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Nobel Peace Prize winning scientific body established to provide comprehensive and objective information about climate change, has concluded that climate change is occurring and exerting pressure on global water resources. The IPCC has further stated that freshwater resources are among the most vulnerable to climate change. A study conducted by researchers at Ohio State University found that rising sea levels could result in a loss of over more than half of the fresh water supplies available for coastal communities as a result of flooding and saltwater intrusion. Dr. James Hansen, the top climate scientist at NASA, says that climate change induced water shortages in the western United States would possibly "render the semi-arid states from west and central Texas through Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas drought prone and unsuitable for agriculture."

According to the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, intensifying rainfall and flooding will result in more severe pollution from overwhelmed wastewater treatment systems, leading to public health threats.

"Growing evidence shows that we cannot afford to take clean drinking water for granted," said Hall. "Action is needed to better understand and react to the effect of climate change on water supplies."

Hall's legislation would direct EPA to work with the NAS to examine the impact of climate change on water resources, government efforts to maintain water quality, and new approaches that may be needed to meet this challenge. Specifically, the study would address:

- Impacts on America's water resources, wetlands, and shorelines,
 - Regional variation in rainfall
 - Water quality protection efforts under the Clean Water Act
 - Steps that should be taken under the Clean Water Act to account for the impacts of climate change on efforts to maintain water quality standards
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